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STATEMENT OF HONORABLE BILL ROYER, REPRESENTATIVE FROM CALIFORNIA, BEFORE THE INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS CONCERNING THE IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES UNDERTAKEN BY STATE DEPARTMENT AFTER THE DEATH OF THE HONORABLE LEO J. RYAN AND THE TRAGEDY AT JONESTOWN

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MARCH 4, 1980

MR. CHAIRMAN, MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE, THANK YOU FOR PERMITTING ME ONCE AGAIN TO SPEAK BEFORE YOU IN THIS, THE SECOND DAY OF HEARINGS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES TAKEN BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT FOLLOWING THE REPORTS WHICH WERE ISSUED AFTER THE ASSASSINATION OF REPRESENTATIVE LEO RYAN AND THE JONESTOWN TRAGEDY.

I WOULD LIKE TO REQUEST, MR. CHAIRMAN, THAT I BE PERMITTED TO RESERVE A FEW MINUTES OF TIME FOR SOME SHORT CONCLUDING REMARKS, AFTER THE WITNESSES FOR THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAVE TESTIFIED THIS AFTERNOON.

I WOULD BE TERRIBLY REMISS, MR. CHAIRMAN, IF I DID NOT COMMEND THE STATE DEPARTMENT FOR THE CANDID AND FORTHRIGHT MANNER IN WHICH THEY TREATED MY INQUIRIES SINCE I HAVE COME BACK HERE TO WASHINGTON TO FILL THE SEAT OF THE LATE LEO RYAN. I WOULD PARTICULARLY LIKE TO COMMEND UNDER SECRETARY NIMETZ, HIS STAFF ASSISTANT PAUL BUNGE, AND GUYANA DESK OFFICER RICHARD McCOY FOR THEIR PERSONAL COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE. WHILE I MAY HAVE SERIOUS DISAGREEMENT WITH THE METHODS OF OPERATION OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT, I CERTAINLY CAN FIND NO FAULT WITH THE LEVEL OF COOPERATION AND CANDOR DISPLAYED TO ME BY THE OFFICERS OF STATE WITH WHOM I HAVE DEALT HERE IN WASHINGTON.

LET ME ALSO CANDIDLY SAY THAT MY VIEWS ON THE PART THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT PLAYED IN THIS ENTIRE UNFORTUNATE AFFAIR HAVE ALTERED APPRECIABLY IN THE MONTHS THAT I HAVE ADDRESSED MYSELF TO THIS MATTER. HOW I VIEW THEIR ROLE, OF COURSE, AFFECTS MY PERCEPTION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE MEASURES THAT THEY HAVE TAKEN TO IMPLEMENT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE STAFF REPORT AND THE CRIMMINS REPORT. LET ME STATE WHAT MY PERCEPTIONS ARE NOW, AND THEN I WILL COMMENT ON THE STEPS THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAS TAKEN.

IN MY VIEW, THE GUYANA TRAGEDY IS TRACEABLE TO THE CREATION OF THAT COUNTRY AS AN INDEPENDENT NATION, OUT OF THE BRITISH COLONIAL SYSTEM. I BELIEVE THAT OUR GOVERNMENT WAS NOT UNHAPPY TO SEE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BURNHAM GOVERNMENT IN GUYANA AS PERHAPS THE LESSER OF TWO EVILS. TO BE SURE, IT HAS BEEN APPARENTLY SOCIALISTIC AND AT TIMES HOSTILE. THERE WERE ALSO ALL OF THOSE FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE SERVICES PRESENT. BUT IT WASN'T AS BAD AS IT COULD HAVE BE IT WAS NOT, FOR EXAMPLE, ANOTHER CUBA. BECAUSE OF THESE AND OTHER FACTORS, IT WAS VERY IMPORTANT FOR OUR GOVERNMENT TO MAINTAIN THE BURNHAM GOVERNMENT IN EXISTENCE IN GUYANA - HENCE THE STATUS QUO WAS TO BE PRESERVED. NOTHING SHOULD OCCUR WHICH WOULD EXACERBATE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND GUYANA. I BELIEVE, THEN, THAT AMBASSADOR BURKE'S DUTY WAS TO MAINTAIN A CONDITION OF LEVELNESS.

INTO THIS SITUATION SUDDENLY STEPPED THE PEOPLE'S TEMPLE. AFTER ESTABLISHING RAPPORT WITH THE BURNHAM GOVERNMENT, THE REVEREND JIM JONES PROCEEDED TO MOVE OVER 900 AMERICAN CITIZENS

INTO ONE OF THE MOST REMOTE AREAS OF GUYANA, IN DEEP JUNGLE, NEAR THE CONTESTED VENEZUELA BORDER. THIS CONCENTRATION OF APPARENTLY DISAFFECTED AMERICAN CITIZENS IN THIS AREA POSED, AT ONCE, A SINGULAR AND UNIQUE CONSULAR AND POLITICAL PROBLEM TO THE EMBASSY, ONE WHICH POTENTIALLY THREATENED THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF GUYANA AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES. THE PROBLEM WAS AGGRAVATED BY THE LACK OF COOPERATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF GUYANA, WHICH MUST SHARE IN THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR WHAT FOLLOWED.

SEVERAL UNCOMFORTABLE THINGS BEGAN TO HAPPEN. THE GUYANESE POLICE TOLD OF FINDING AN AMERICAN WANDERING IN THE JUNGLE NEAR MATTHEWS RIDGE, TELLING OF BEATINGS AND FORCED LABOR IN JONESTOWN. FAMILIES BEGAN TO COMPLAIN THAT THEIR RELATIVES WERE BEING HELD AGAINST THEIR WILL, AND SUBJECTED TO PSYCHOLOGICAL MIND CONTROL. THE INCREDIBLE CHILD CUSTODY CASE INVOLVING BOTH NATURAL PARENTS OF JOHN STOEN TRYING TO WREST THE CHILD AWAY FROM THE REVEREND JIM JONES OCCURRED. THERE WERE THREATS OF MASS SUICIDE, IF THE CHILD WERE REMOVED FROM JONESTOWN. PARENTS VISITED GUYANA FROM AMERICA, AND WERE NOT ALLOWED TO SEE THEIR CHILDREN, OR WERE ALLOWED TO SEE THEM IN THE MOST PECULIAR, TENSION-LADEN CIRCUMSTANCES. PETITIONS WERE SENT BY CONCERNED RELATIVES. LETTERS WERE SENT BY UNITED STATES CONGRESSMEN. AFFIDAVITS WERE SENT FROM A DEFECTOR, DETAILING, IN THE MOST SPECIFIC MANNER, THE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS WHICH WERE OCCURRING, ON A DAILY BASIS, IN JONESTOWN.

AND YET, DURING THIS ENTIRE PERIOD OF TIME, ALL OFFICIAL RESPONSES BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT TO THE LETTERS, AFFIDAVITS AND PETITIONS WAS THAT THERE WERE NO DETECTABLE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS, THAT EVERYTHING WAS JUST FINE. THIS WAS THE EMBASSY'S POSITION;

THIS WAS WASHINGTON'S POSITION. THERE WAS THE EXCHANGE OF CABLES IN JUNE; AN EXPRESSION BY AMBASSADOR BURKE OF CONCERN. THE REPLY, HOWEVER, WAS UNMISTAKABLE; MAINTAIN THE STATUS QUO.

IT IS CLEAR, THEN, MR. CHAIRMAN, THAT THERE EVOLVED EARLY ON AN OFFICIAL STATE DEPARTMENT POLICY TO EMBARGO THE JONESTOWN MATTER. THEY WERE TO DO NOTHING, TO SAY NOTHING, TO VOLUNTEER NOTHING - TO ANYONE, INCLUDING A UNITED STATES CONGRESSMAN, IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN THE CURRENT STATE OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GUYANA AND THE UNITED STATES. THE TESTIMONY OF ALL OF THE WITNESSES ON FEBRUARY 20, 1980, AS WELL AS MY OWN INVESTIGATION LEADS ME TO BELIEVE THIS TO BE THE CASE.

I REALIZE THAT THESE ARE HARSH WORDS. I REALIZE THAT THEY DO NOT SQUARE WITH THE PUBLISHED FINDINGS THAT THIS INCREDIBLE EPISODE WAS ENTIRELY THE RESULT OF A SERIES OF NEGLIGENT, NON-WILLFUL MISTAKES. I SAY THAT THERE WAS NO NEGLIGENCE. I SAY THAT IT WAS A COGNIZANT, DELIBERATE POLICY OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT TO EMBARGO ALL INFORMATION OF WRONGDOING AND HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN JONESTOWN AS BEING NECESSARY TO PROTECT OUR NATIONAL INTERESTS. IT ALSO APPEARS THAT THIS MAY HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE ASSASSINATION OF REPRESENTATIVE LEO RYAN AND THE DEATH OF 900 AMERICANS IN JONESTOWN.

TO POINT THE FINGER AT THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PRIVACY ACTS, IS TO RAISE A SMOKE SCREEN. TO BE SURE, ON ITS FACE, SOME PEOPLE MAY FIND RESTRAINING CONSIDERATIONS IN THESE ACTS. I

INTEND TO PURSUE AMENDMENTS TO THESE ACTS WHICH WILL, HOPEFULLY, REMOVE THESE RESTRAINTS. BUT THE FACT IS, THESE ACTS DID NOT PREVENT MEANINGFUL COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN THE EMBASSY AND WASHINGTON. BOTH AMBASSADOR BURKE AND CONSULAR OFFICER McCOY HAD AMPLE OPPORTUNITIES TO ORALLY STATE ALL THE FACTS TO STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS HERE IN WASHINGTON, AND TO THE RYAN PARTY, IN THE MOST GRAPHIC DETAIL POSSIBLE. IT IS CLEAR THAT AT LEAST AS TO THE RYAN PARTY, THEY DID NOT. SO ANY IMPLEMENTATION STEPS ADDRESSED TO THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT SHOULD BE TAKEN IN CONTEXT, MR. CHAIRMAN, WITH THE FACT THAT WHEN THE POLICY IS TO EMBARGO, IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT THE LAW IS.

THERE IS NOTHING THAT WE WILL HEAR TODAY, MR. CHAIRMAN, THAT WILL PUT YOUR MIND AT EASE THAT GIVEN THE SAME FACTS, THE SAME RESULT AS OCCURRED IN JONESTOWN WILL NOT OCCUR AGAIN. INSTEAD, WE WILL HEAR OF PROCEDURES, OF MEETINGS, OF TRAINING CLASSES, OF MEMORANDA AND MONTHLY ASSESSMENTS. BUT WE WILL NOT HEAR OF COMMITMENT TO THE WELFARE OF AMERICANS RESIDING IN A FOREIGN COUNTRY - OR THAT OF A UNITED STATES CONGRESSMAN - WHERE THERE ARE COUNTERVAILING NATIONAL INTERESTS THAT MUST BE PROTECTED.

LET ME TURN NOW TO THE STEPS THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAS TAKEN. THE PRINCIPAL DOCUMENT WHICH SETS FORTH WHAT STATE HAS DONE SINCE THE TRAGEDY IS THE LETTER OF NOVEMBER 21, 1979, FROM THEN COUNSELOR MATTHEW NIMETZ TO THE HONORABLE PETER W. RODINO, JR., CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY. THIS LETTER WAS WRITTEN IN RESPONSE TO CHAIRMAN RODINO'S INQUIRY, WHICH HE KINDLY

MADE AT MY REQUEST, AS TO THE CURRENT STATE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS. CHAIRMAN ZABLOCKI OF THE FULL COMMITTEE HAD ALSO REQUESTED THIS INFORMATION.

I HAVE PREVIOUSLY PROVIDED THE MEMBERS OF THIS SUBCOMMITTEE WITH A COPY OF THAT LETTER. THE LETTER INDICATES THAT SUBSEQUENT TO THE CRIMMINS REPORT, THE STATE DEPARTMENT UNDERTOOK A PROGRAM OF ADVANCED TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONSULAR OFFICIALS, WHICH INCLUDES AN INTRODUCTION TO PSYCHOLOGICAL MIND CONTROL TECHNIQUES AND EMPHASIZES CLOSER COORDINATION BETWEEN CONSULAR OFFICERS AND THEIR POLITICAL COUNTERPARTS.

MY RESPONSE TO THIS STATEMENT IS THAT ALL OF THE TRAINING AND COORDINATION DOES NOT EXCUSE LACK OF COMMITMENT TO THE WELFARE OF AMERICAN CITIZENS AND TO MEMBERS OF CONGRESS. COORDINATION BETWEEN THE POLITICAL AND CONSULAR SECTIONS IS FINE, BUT YOU MUST REMEMBER, MR. CHAIRMAN, THAT ALL FUNCTIONS, CONSULAR AND POLITICAL, ARE UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE AMBASSADOR, AND IN A SMALL EMBASSY SUCH AS EXISTED IN GUYANA, WE MUST ASSUME THAT THE AMBASSADOR KNEW ALL OF WHAT WAS GOING ON. WHAT WE DON'T SEE IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S LETTER IS A STATEMENT OF WHAT THE AMBASSADOR IS GOING TO DO, AFTER THE TRAINING, AFTER THE COORDINATION, WHEN THE LIVES OF AMERICANS AND THEIR CONGRESSMAN ARE THREATENED.

THE LETTER FURTHER INDICATES THAT PROCEDURES HAVE BEEN DEVISED TO PROVIDE FOR BETTER SECURITY FOR CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATIONS, BY PROVIDING FOR THREAT ASSESSMENTS, PRIOR TO DEPARTURE. I RECALL, MR. CHAIRMAN, IF YOU WILL, JACKIE SPEIER'S TESTIMONY, THAT IN HER

OPINION, IF SUCH A THREAT ASSESSMENT HAD BEEN MADE FOR REPRESENTATIVE RYAN, IT PROBABLY WOULD HAVE BEEN THAT THERE WAS NO DANGER. I THINK I CONCUR. I BELIEVE THAT STATE WOULD HAVE DETERMINED THAT IT WAS IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST TO TELL REPRESENTATIVE RYAN THAT THERE WAS NO THREAT TO HIS LIFE IN GOING TO GUYANA. A THREAT ASSESSMENT, THEN, APPEARS TO BE A FINE MOVE, IF STATE WILL TELL YOU WHAT IT FINDS.

OTHER SECURITY MATTERS BOTHER ME. THE LETTER DOES NOT INDICATE, FOR INSTANCE, THAT STATE WILL, AS AN ORDINARY AND ROUTINE MATTER, TRANSMIT TO ALL LOCAL AND APPROPRIATE UNITED STATES AUTHORITIES INFORMATION THEY RECEIVE OF CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR BY OR AGAINST AMERICAN CITIZENS RESIDING ABROAD. NOR IS THERE ANY INDICATION THAT STATE WILL ROUTINELY ADVISE AMERICAN CITIZENS RESIDING IN A FOREIGN COUNTRY WHAT THEIR LEGAL RIGHTS ARE IN THAT COUNTRY. THE HEARINGS THIS SUBCOMMITTEE HELD IN 1977 TOUCHED ON THESE SPECIFIC ISSUES, AND I AM DISAPPOINTED THAT THEY AGAIN ARE BEFORE YOU.

STATE'S LETTER ALSO REFERS TO THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PRIVACY ACTS. I HAVE ALREADY SPOKEN OF MY VIEWS ON THIS MATTER. I WILL, NEVERTHELESS, CONTINUE TO PRESS FOR AMENDMENTS TO THESE ACTS WHICH WILL REMOVE EVERY IMPEDIMENT TO CANDID COMMUNICATION WITHIN THE STATE DEPARTMENT.

FINALLY, MR. CHAIRMAN, THE LETTER CALLS ATTENTION TO A CITIZENS EMERGENCY CENTER WHICH IS OR HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED, I

PRESUME, IN COUNTRIES WITH LARGE AMERICAN POPULATIONS, TOURIST OR OTHERWISE. IN LIGHT OF THE CONCERNS I HAVE EXPRESSED TODAY, AND IN VIEW OF THE PECULIAR NATURE OF THE JONESTOWN EXPERIENCE, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THESE CENTERS DOES NOT GIVE ME MUCH HOPE THAT THEY WILL PREVENT A RECURRENCE OF THE TRAGEDY.

IN CONCLUSION TO MY OPENING STATEMENT, MR. CHAIRMAN, I WOULD LIKE TO EMPHASIZE MY PERCEPTION OF THE PROBLEM: ALL OF THE TRAINING, PROCEDURES, COORDINATION AND ASSESSMENTS ARE MEANINGLESS IF THE STATE DEPARTMENT FINDS ITSELF IN THE AWKWARD SITUATION OF CHOOSING BETWEEN REVEALING MISTAKES, IF BY SO DOING, THEY MAY AFFECT A SENSITIVE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE HOST COUNTRY AND THE UNITED STATES, - OR DOING NOTHING, AND HOPING THAT THE PROBLEM WILL GO AWAY - THAT IT WILL CHOOSE THE LATTER COURSE, REGARDLESS OF THE FACT THAT AMERICAN LIVES - INCLUDING THE LIFE OF A MEMBER OF CONGRESS - MAY BE LOST BY SO DOING.

THE CONGRESS AND THE STATE DEPARTMENT MUST DEVISE A PROCEDURE WHEREBY THE LIVES OF AMERICANS LIVING ABROAD, THE LIVES OF CONGRESSMEN TRAVELING ABROAD, AND OUR NATIONAL INTERESTS MAY BE PROTECTED. IF NOTHING ELSE COMES OF THESE HEARINGS, THIS MUST.

THANK YOU, MR. CHAIRMAN, MY COLLEAGUES. I WOULD LIKE TO RESERVE THE BALANCE OF MY TIME FOR LATER IN THIS HEARING.